



The Late Middle Ages

Chapter 9

The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)

- In the 12th and 13th centuries centralization of royal power in England and France had proceeded without interruption.
- A continuing succession crisis during the early 14th century made clear the limits of the French kingship.
 - In 1328 the Capetian line died out.
 - The last Capetians did produce daughters, but by the 14th century many argued that the French crown should pass through the male line only.

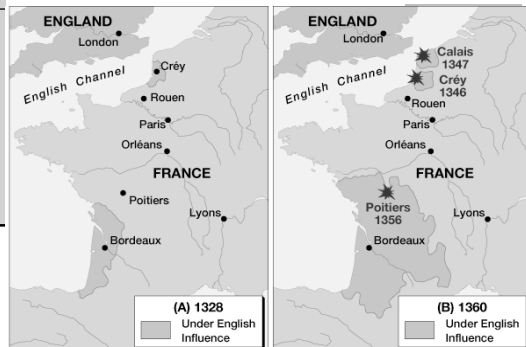
The Hundred Years' War: Causes

- The French nobility selected as king Philip of Valois (Philip VI), a cousin of the last king through the male line.
 - Philip founded a new French dynasty that ruled into the 16th century.
 - He was chosen in preference to King Edward III of England, whose mother was the daughter of the late king Philip IV.
- In 1340, Edward III of England formally claimed the title "King of France."

The Hundred Years' War: Causes

- Controversy over succession was just one of the disagreements between the French and English.
 - An even longer standing issue was the status of lands within France that belonged to English kings.
 - Edward was actually a vassal of Philip's holding sizable French territories as fiefs from the king of France. (Went back to Norman conquest)
- The Hundred Years' War was a struggle for national identity as well as control of territory.
 - Two emergent territorial powers.

The Hundred Years' War



The Hundred Years' War

- The Hundred Years' War was a series of short raids and expeditions punctuated by a few major battles an marked off by truces or ineffective treaties.
- The relative strengths of each country dictated the sporadic nature of the struggle.
- France
 - With a population of about 16 million, France was far richer and more populous than England.
 - On at least one occasion, the French managed to field an army of over 50,000; at most the English mustered only 32,000.

The Hundred Years' War: Strategy

- In almost every engagement the English were outnumbered.
 - The most successful English strategy was to avoid pitched battles and engage in a series of quick, profitable raids during which they stole what they could, destroyed what they could not steal, and captured enemy knights to hold for ransom.
- Initially, the war was characterized by a rapid series of English assaults and victories.
 - The few pitched battles, Crecy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) occurred when the English found themselves trapped and unable to avoid the French.

The Longbow

- The use of the English defensive position was the use of the longbow.
- Arrows from the longbow had more penetrating power than a bolt from a crossbow.
 - Could pierce an inch of wood or the armor of a knight at 200 yards.
- A longbow could be fired much more rapidly.
 - 6 arrows per minute



French Confusion

- At Poitiers (1356) the English captured the French king, John II (r. 1350-1364).
 - France was now ruled by the **Estates General**, a representative council of townspeople and nobles that had been created in 1355 in order to secure funds for the war.
- **Jacquerie**
 - In the confusion and unrest following the French disaster at Poitiers, a rural movement, or **jacquerie** (jack-eh-REE), began in response to the longstanding economic and political grievances in the countryside that had been worsened by warfare.
 - The rebels were defeated by aristocratic armies.

The Hundred Years' War

- **Peace of Bretigny (1360)**
 - France paid a ransom of three million gold crowns to win the return of King John II.
 - Declared an end to Edward's vassalage to the king of France.
 - Affirmed Edward's sovereignty over English territories in France.
 - Peace would be short-lived as France stuck back to regain English territories in France.
- England was soon rocked by unrest as well.
 - Peasants' Revolt (1381) put down by King Richard II (r. 1377-1399).

Trouble in England

- After charges of tyranny, Richard II was forced to abdicate in 1399. Parliament then elected Henry IV (r. 1399-1413), the first ruler from the house of Lancaster.
 - Richard himself died in prison under mysterious circumstances in 1400.
- Mindful of the situation that brought him to power, Henry IV avoided war taxes and was careful not to alienate the nobles.
 - The effect was a truce to the French and English hostilities.

King Henry V (r.1412-1422)

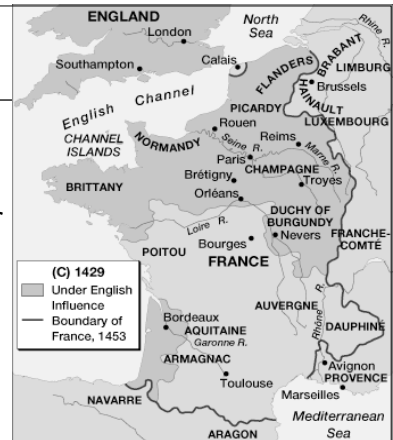
- Henry V renewed his family's claim to the French throne.
- At Agincourt in 1415, the English (led by Henry himself) again enticed a larger French army into attacking a fortified English position.
 - With the aid of the dukes of Burgundy, Henry gained control over Normandy, Paris, and much of northern France.
- **Treaty of Troyes (1420)**
 - Charles VI's son (the future Charles VII) was declared illegitimate and disinherited.



Treaty of Troyes (1420)

- Charles VI's son (the future Charles VII) was declared illegitimate and disinherited.
- Henry V married Catherine, the daughter of Charles VI.
 - Henry was declared the legitimate heir to the French throne.
- A final English victory seemed assured, but both Charles VI and Henry V died in 1422, leaving Henry's infant son, Henry VI (r. 1422-1461), to inherit both thrones.

The Hundred Years' War



The French Reconquest

- The kings' death ushered in the final stage of the Hundred Years' War, the French reconquest, from 1422 to 1453.
 - In 1428, military and political power seemed firmly in the hands of the English and the great aristocrats. Yet in a stunning series of events, the French were able to reverse the situation.
- In 1429, with the aid of the mysterious Joan of Arc, the French king— Charles VII— was able to raise the English siege of Orleans (or-lay-OHN) and begin the reconquest of the north of France.

Joan of Arc



- Joan was the daughter of prosperous peasants from an area of Burgundy that had suffered under the English.
- Like many medieval mystics, she reported regular visions of divine revelation.
 - Her "voices" told her to go to the king and assist him in driving out the English.
- Dressed like a man, she was Charles' most charismatic and feared military leader.
 - She brought inspiration and a sense of national identity and self-confidence.

Joan of Arc

- With Joan's aid, the king was crowned in the cathedral at Reims, the traditional site of French coronations. (Ending the "disinheritance")
- Joan was captured during an attack on Paris and eventually fell into English hands.
 - Because of her "unnatural dress" and her claim to divine guidance, she was condemned and burned as a heretic in 1432.
 - Joan almost instantly became a symbol of French resistance.
 - The pope reversed the condemnation in 1456 and Joan was canonized in 1920 becoming Saint Joan, patron of France.

The Hundred Years' War: The End

- Despite Joan's capture, the French advance continued.
- By 1450 the English had lost all their major centers except Calais (Ca-lay).
- In 1453 the French armies captured an English-held fortress in what was to be the last battle of the war.
- There was no treaty, only a cessation of hostilities.

The Black Death

- Between 1348-1351, nearly a third of Europe's population died from an outbreak of bubonic plague.
 - Coined "The Black Death" by sixteenth-century chroniclers because it discolored the body.
- The epidemic began in the Crimea around 1346 and soon spread to Constantinople, Cairo, and Sicily by 1347.
 - By 1348, the disease had reached France and England. Eventually, the plague struck eastern Europe, and in 1352 appeared in Moscow.



The Black Death: Causes

- The disease, carried by fleas that live on rats, was endemic in some Central Asian rodent populations.
 - The death rate was higher in some cities and lower in many rural areas. The disease spread mainly along well-traveled lines of trade and communication.
- **By 1300, the large population explosion had outgrown the food supply.**
 - Progressively weakened by malnutrition, Europe's population was highly vulnerable to disease.

Obsession with Death and Dying

- Representations of death became a prominent theme in European arts throughout the plague years. Apocalyptic images featuring the allegoric figure of Death attempted to explain the importance of the Black Death for European society.
- This woodcut from the mid-14th century depicts one of the most popular themes of these images, the triumph of death.



The Black Death

- Mortality rates varied, but generally 60 percent or more of those infected died.
 - In the initial infestation of 1348-1351, from 25 to 35 percent of Europe's population may have died.
 - In some of Europe's larger cities, the proportion may have been as high as 60 percent.
- The plague was to return along much the same axes about every twenty years for the next three centuries.
- The loss of so much life brought profound consequences throughout Europe.

The Plague and the Economy

- The economy had grown more complex in the wake of plague and demographic change.
- New patterns of trade and banking and new manufacturing techniques spread throughout Europe.
- As important as simple recovery, the new economy was more firmly rooted in northern Europe.
 - Italian merchants and bankers faced stiff competition from local counterparts throughout Europe.

The Crisis of the Western Christian Church: King vs. Pope

- The Roman Catholic Church was in turmoil as a result of an attack on Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294-1303) by King Philip IV, the Fair, of France (r. 1285-1314).
 - The king attempted to kidnap the pope, intending to try him for heresy because of the pope's challenge to the king's authority within his own kingdom.
 - Boniface VIII ended up dying from a severe beating inflicted by his would-be kidnappers.
- After the death of Boniface, it was clear that the governments of Europe had no intention of recognizing papal authority as absolute.

The Babylonian Captivity, 1309-1377

- Pope Clement V (r. 1305-1314) decided to remain north of the Alps.
 - Marked the beginning of the so-called Babylonian Captivity, a period during which the pope resided almost continuously outside of Italy.
 - In 1309, Clement moved the papal court to Avignon. The papacy and its new residence in Avignon became a major religious, diplomatic, and commercial center.
- To many, the exile of the papacy epitomized everything that was wrong with the church.

The Babylonian Captivity, 1309-1377

- Under strong French and cut off from its Roman estates, the papacy needed to find a way to get needed fun.
- Clement VI (r. 1342-1352) began the practice of selling indulgences, or pardons for unrepented sins.
 - Church doctrine on purgatory developed.
 - Indulgences also applied to people already dead.
- Gave reformers new cause to criticize the growing materialism of the Avignon papacy.

Opposition to the Avignon Papacy

- John Wycliffe (1329-1384)
 - In the 1370s Wycliffe, an Oxford theologian and parish priest, began to criticize the state of the clergy and the abuses of the church hierarchy.
 - Christians need not unquestioningly obey the pronouncements of the church hierarchy.
 - That special homage was due only to Scripture, insisted Wycliffe, who sponsored the first English translations of the Bible into English.
 - He gathered around himself followers, called Lollards, emphasized Bible reading and attacked the ecclesiastical hierarchy.
- By 1387 his ideas had been declared heretical and his followers were hunted out.



John Wycliffe's Bible

- This is a page from Wycliffe's bible - the first time the bible had been translated into English for the common people to read.



Opposition to the Avignon Papacy

- Wycliffe's influence continued on the Continent in the circle of Jan Hus (d. 1415) and the Czech reformers.
- Hus and his followers the Hussites also attacked clerical power and privileges.
 - Supported vernacular translations of the Bible.
 - Critical of traditional ceremonies and allegedly superstitious practices relating to the Eucharist.
 - Bread and wine remained bread and wine.
- Hus was condemned by the Council of Constance as a heretic and burned at the stake in 1415.

The Great Schism, 1378-1417

- In 1377 Pope Gregory XI (r. 1370-1378) bowed to critics' pressure and did return to Rome.
 - Upon Gregory's death the cardinals in Rome elected an Italian pope: Pope Urban VI (r. 1378-1389)
 - The French cardinals responded by electing a French pope: Clement VII (r. 1378-1394)
- The church now had two popes.
 - Western Christians divided into two camps, initiating the Great Schism, a period of almost 40 years during which no one knew for sure who was the real pope.

The Great Schism, 1378-1417

- The two sides largely mirrored the political tensions in Europe.
 - France and those governments most closely allied with it supported Clement, who eventually resettled in Avignon.
 - The English, together with most Italian governments, the German Empire, etc. supported Urban, the pope in Rome.
- In exasperation, the rival cardinals called a general council in Pisa, which deposed both popes and elected a new one, Alexander V.
- There were now three men claiming to be pope.

The Great Schism, 1378-1417

- Resolution finally came when the Holy Roman emperor forced the third pope to call a general council of the church at the German city of Constance.
- Council of Constance
 - Deposed all three popes and, in 1417, elected a Roman nobleman as Martin V (r.1417-1431).
- Results
 - Popes could no longer expect to remain unchallenged if they made claims of absolute dominion.
 - And ecclesiastical rights and jurisdictions increasingly were matters for negotiation.

The Crisis of the Western Christian Church: Conclusion

- Early in the 14th century, the Western Christian Church endured a series of crises that instituted a debate about the nature of church government and the role of the church in society.
 - At various times all the European powers became entangled in the problems of the church.
 - Because of the conciliar challenges to papal authority, popes had to deal much more carefully with the governments of Europe.
- In the end, popes could count on support only from those areas controlled politically, the papacy became an Italian regional power.